

The University of Alberta Department of Music presents:

MUSIC AT CONVOCATION HALL



***University of Alberta
Madrigal Singers
“An A Cappella Tapestry”***

Director : Leonard Ratzlaff

Friday January 18, 2013 8:00 PM



DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

University of Alberta
Madrigal Singers
"An A Cappella Tapestry"

PROGRAMME

Data est mihi omnes potestas
from the *Strathclyde Motets*

James MacMillan
(b. 1959)

Veni Sancte Spiritus

David Hamilton
(b. 1955)

Soloist: Katrina Townsend

Psalm 23

Lera Auerbach
(b. 1973)

*Soloists: Gianna Read, Soprano;
Jennifer O'Donnell, Alto; RJ Chambers, Tenor*

Psalm 130

Soloists: Gianna Read, Soprano; Silken Conradi, Alto

"Schaffe in mir, Gott, ein rein Herz"
from *Zwei Motetten*, Op. 29

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

~ INTERMISSION ~

Four2

John Cage
(1912-1992)

Lullaby

Lera Auerbach
(b. 1973)

*Soloists: Kaitlynd Hiller, Soprano, Elizabeth Kreiter, Alto
Conductor: Sara Brooks*

"Bogoroditse Devo"
from *The All-Night Vigil (Vespers)*

Sergei Rachmaninov
(1873-1943)

*With Madrigal Singers Alumni
Conductor: Sara Brooks*

Choir Concerto
1st Mvt

Alfred Schnittke
(1934-1998)

*With Madrigal Singers Alumni
Conductor: Dr. Leonard Ratzlaff*

Programme Notes:

Data est mihi omnes potestas* from the *Strathclyde Motets

James MacMillan (b. 1959)

Scottish composer James MacMillan completed studies in composition at the University of Edinburgh and Durham University, resulting in a PhD received in 1987. Since this time he has received international acclaim for numerous compositions, including *The Confession of Isobel Gowdie* (1992) and his opera *The Sacrifice* commissioned by the Welsh National Opera in 2007. He served as principal composer and conductor for the BBC Philharmonic from 2000-2009. MacMillan's choral works are influenced by both Scottish traditional music, and liturgical music. His *Strathclyde Motets* are a set of twelve Latin motets for SATB choir, and received the British Composer Award for Liturgical Music in 2008. His intent in composing the works was to create functional communion motets of moderate difficulty for use by ensembles of any level. With inflections of ancient Celtic music, the motets combine the old with the new, creating a powerful setting of these early texts.

***Veni Sancte Spiritus*, David Hamilton (b. 1955)**

New Zealand composer David Hamilton maintains an active career as lecturer, tutor, and choral conductor. Notable positions include his post as Deputy Music Director of Auckland Choral Symphonic Choir from 1996 to 2011 and as Composer-in-residence for the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra 1999-2000. With over 100 works written for choir his music has been widely performed throughout Japan, England, Finland, USA, and Ireland. Written for SSATB choir, *Veni Sancte Spiritus* was completed in 2000 and was the winning work in the University of Bologna choral composition competition.

Lera Auerbach (b. 1973, Russia/U.S.A)

Pianist and composer Lera Auerbach is a much sought after musician, with works being commissioned throughout the world. Following her travels through the USA in 1991, she made the decision to remain in the West. She graduated from the New York Juilliard School in piano (with Joseph Kalichstein) and composition (with Milton Babbitt and Robert Beaser), simultaneously studying comparative literary science at Columbia University. She gave her Carnegie Hall debut in 2002, where she performed her own Suite for Violin, Piano and String Orchestra with Gidon Kremer and the Kremerata Baltica. The international career of this composer, pianist and author continues to flourish. *Psalm 23* (1999) is written for SATB choir performed in Hebrew and is based on the original text from the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. First performed in 1999, the work is dedicated to Tom Waldeck. *Psalm 130* (1999) is a piece for SATB choir with Latin text and is based on Psalm 130, a Penitential Psalm used in liturgical prayers for the departed in Western liturgical tradition. First performed in 1999, this work is dedicated to Page and Elizabeth Johnson. *Lullaby* (2002) is composed for SATB choir based on William Blake's poem Cradle Song. This work was first performed in Vienna by the Vox Humana Chamber Choir in November 2004.

“Schaffe in mir, Gott, ein rein Herz” from *Zwei Motetten*, Op. 29

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Completed in July 1860, this three movement motet, a setting of three verses from Psalm 51, received its first performance in Vienna on April 17th 1864, under the direction of Brahms himself. While the motet was a genre well exploited in the Baroque period, its use had declined throughout the Classical era. Brahms maintained an interest in compositional methods and structures of the Baroque and took particular pride in his revival of the motet. In this, he was naturally influenced by the works of J.S. Bach. Each section sets one verse of text from the Psalm. The opening movement presents itself in a formal chorale setting, though buried within one finds compositional treasure: an augmented canon at the octave between soprano and bass. The second movement is a chromatic fugue filled with classic elements of stretto and thematic inversion. The final section, opening with canonic three part textures concludes with yet another fugue filled with canons and sequential scoring; most certainly a vocal challenge! Important to take away from this particular motet, is Brahms' dedication to communicating the power of text. Even with his mastery of contrapuntal writing, his emotional intensity through specific text repetitions is not to be missed.

Four2 (1990) John Cage (1912–1992)

As one of the leaders of the post-war avant-garde, John Cage is arguably one of the most influential American composers of the 20th century. With multiple titles including composer, philosopher, poet, music theorist, artist, and printmaker, he is also a noted pioneer of aleatoric and electronic music. Additionally he was instrumental in the development of modern dance in America, through association with choreographer Merce Cunningham. Teachers included Henry Cowell and Arnold Schoenberg, both noted for musical innovations. Cage is perhaps best known for his 1952 composition 4'33", a three-movement work "performed" without intentional sound. *Four2* was composed in 1990 for SATB chorus, and is one of forty-three "number pieces" composed between 1987 and 1992. The titles indicate the number of performers required for each piece, while the superscript numbers allow for multiple use of the title number. Each vocal section of the four-part choral ensemble is given individual pitches to be sounded within given time indications. The "text" consists of letters that spell the U.S. state name, Oregon.

"Bogoroditse Devo" from *The All-Night Vigil* (Vespers)

Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943)

The all-night vigil is celebrated on the eve of the main feasts of the Orthodox Church. The celebration originally consisted of three separate services to celebrate the spiritual light of Christ as the new light of the approaching day. Rachmaninov's setting of the vigil was written in 1915, amidst the chaos of the First World War. He has used authentic znamenny (from the Slavonic znamia meaning "sign") chants in seven of the movements, with two movements employing Greek chants. The work is dedicated to the scholar Stephan Vasilevitch Smolensky who introduced Rachmaninov to the repertoire of the church. The composition was also considered by many to be a powerful affirmation of nationalism during the war. The title of the work is often translated as simply Vespers, however only the first six of the 15 movements are set from texts from the Russian Orthodox canonical hour of Vespers. It is the sixth movement, "Bogoroditse Devo" which will be performed this evening.

Choral Concerto (1984) 1st Mvt Alfred Schnittke (1934–1998, Russia)

Schnittke was born in 1934 in the Soviet Union. After living for several years in Vienna, he returned to Moscow and attended the Conservatory from 1953-1958. He eventually returned there and taught instrumentation from 1962-1972. He continued in this position with time spent between Moscow and Hamburg and worked as a film composer. Schnittke's output includes nine symphonies, six concerti grossi, four violin concertos, two cello concertos, concertos for piano, a triple concerto for violin, viola and cello, four string quartets, ballet scores, choral and vocal works. His first opera, *Life with an Idiot*, was premiered in Amsterdam (April 1992). Stemming from a uniquely Russian choral tradition, the Concerto for Mixed chorus was completed in 1985 and is composed of four movements. With a seemingly simple harmonic language, Schnittke makes use of multiple voicing divisions and diatonic clusters which envelop the listener in a chromatic density. The texts are from the third chapter of *The Book of Lamentations*, by Grigor Narekatsi, an Armenian monk who lived from 951-1003. The texts were translated into Russian by Naum Grebnev (1921-1988), an author and composer friend of Schnittke. The premiere took place on June 9, 1986 at the State Pushkin's Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow.

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IMANTA (Latvian Association of Alberta)
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Sara Brooks
Anna Chen
Sherry Giebelhaus
Kaitlynd Hiller
Gianna Read
Sylvia Romanowska
Katrina Smith
Alexandra Thompson
Katrina Townsend
Leigh Walbaum
Andrea Vogel

Alto:

Bailey Cameron
Silken Conradi
Lana Cuthbertson
Hilary Davis
Elizabeth Kreiter
Kayla MacDonald
Angela McKeown
Tammy-Jo Mortensen
Jennifer O'Donnell
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Adam Sartore

Director:

Dr. Leonard Radzlaff

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Shannon Brink
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Isabel Davis
Annette Martens
Connie McLaws

Alto:

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